

LGBTQ2S+ "What we heard" Report
For the Edmonton Police Service

MCG Consulting Solutions

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1. Introduction

This report documents the results of the internal consultations between members of the Edmonton Police Service (EPS) and MCG Consulting Solutions (represented by Devon Clunis) with respect to the relationship between the Edmonton Police Service and members of the LGBTQ2S+ community. It provides a summary of actions taken with key findings and recommendations for a path forward in the process of reconciliation and building a sustainable relationship.

This review was conducted at an important time in the Edmonton Police Service's history, shortly after the arrival of Chief Dale McFee. A change in leadership is an opportune time to address cultural and institutional norms and forge new paths in advancing policing and community safety. Chief McFee took a step forward in community and police relationships in Edmonton, when, on May 3, 2019, he delivered a public apology to the LGBTQ2S+ community for the historic marginalization and treatment by the police. This bold action has positioned the EPS as a leader in fostering strong relationships with historically marginalized and vulnerable groups such as the LGBTQ2S+ community.

2. Commentary on Community and Police Relationships

Policing has become increasingly complex in the recent past. Gone are the days of ethnic, cultural, and socially homogenous police organizations. Communities expect more from their police agencies and want them to reflect the diversity of the community in its various forms of visible and social expression.

In conjunction with various forms of social diversity, society has undergone a profound evolution relative to the LGBTQ2S+ community. This shift is comparable to the evolutionary shift in the “women’s rights movement” which saw women gain greater social equality, and the “civil rights movement” which saw African Americans struggle to gain social justice and equality. These profound social and cultural shifts were often impacted by police action or lack thereof.

Relative to the LGBTQ2S+ community, policing has not always been supportive in advancing the rights of the community. While this may once have been attributed to societal views and a discriminatory legal framework, we know that society’s views and the laws relative to the LGBTQ2S+ community have evolved. For police to be effective, their views and expressions of those views must evolve as well. The key principles for effective policing in the 21st century are trust and legitimacy within the broad community.

A brief synopsis and historical context of LGBTQ2S+ rights in Canada:

- Same-sex sexual relationships were treated as crimes punishable by imprisonment until 1969.
- The Canadian Human Rights Act was amended in 1996 to include sexual orientation as one of the grounds for discrimination.
- In 2000, the passage of Bill C-23 gave same-sex couple the same social and tax benefits as heterosexuals in common-law relationships.
- In 2005, the Civil Marriage Act gave same-sex couples the right to be married anywhere in Canada.
- All of this is indicative of a significant social change relative to the rights of LGBTQ2S+ community members in a civil society.
- Today, surveys indicate that 80% of Canada's general population and 87% of Canadians between 18 and 29 years of age are positively disposed to LGBTQ2S+ rights.

Police leaders must begin to examine the conditions that impact relationships in their communities and work to build and sustain those relationships. In order to do this, there must be genuine openness and transparency with a willingness to acknowledge the challenges of the past, while committing to a future void of those errors.

Building on the apology delivered to the LGBTQ2S+ community by Chief McFee on May 3rd, 2019, the internal engagement process sought to hear directly from EPS members and use that feedback to formulate effective steps in building a strong, trusting relationship between the EPS and the LGBTQ2S+ community, both internally and externally. True, effective community policing in Edmonton is dependant on a strong relationship between police and the LGBTQ2S+ community, but that relationship stems from EPS members, and their thoughts, opinions and ideas around this process.

3. Study Scope of Work

To advance policing and community safety, police services and cities must examine their past and acknowledge the impact it has on segments of society. In some cases, atonement is necessary to prepare police and community for a better future. Atonement can take many forms and the prescription is often individual and community sensitive.

In the case of the relationship between the EPS and the LGBTQ2S+ community, the past relationship was one that left wounds, and the impacts continue to reverberate and impede healthy relationships. The EPS undertook research which concluded that actions taken in the past by the EPS "marginalized and discriminated against" the LGBTQ2S+ community. The EPS acknowledges that those actions continue to negatively impact trust in the police by members of the community today.

In looking to the future, the EPS was determined to find a way to begin to establish trust, and sought to do this by recognizing the need for a public apology, but more importantly, a meaningful engagement with the LGBTQ2S+ community internally and externally.

The apology set the tone for the ensuing phases of the engagement which included an internal and external process.

All external consultations and on-line interactions were facilitated by ZGM, an Edmonton based consulting firm who will provide a companion report detailing their process and findings. MCG Consulting Solutions was engaged to oversee all aspects of the internal EPS consulting process. The internal consultant is a retired chief of police with a strong understanding of policing culture and has consulting experience across Canada and the U.S.

This review sought to evaluate the internal perception of the relationship of the EPS with the LGBTQ2s+ community and determine steps to enhance that relationship internally and externally. The review would engage past and current, civilian and sworn members of the organization.

4. Introduction to the Methodologies Used in the Review

The principal approaches utilized in the internal review were the following:

(1) On-line Survey

A short, two question, on-line survey was distributed to members of the EPS. The survey was conducted immediately following the Chief's public apology and was accessible from May 3rd to June 3rd. A concurrent public survey was undertaken by ZGM during the same time period.

(2) Focus Group and One on One Meetings

In person meetings were held at a non-police facility between September 10th - 13th and two telephone interviews were conducted at the request and availability of participants.

5. Key Findings:

1. Continued education and information sharing on the history of the relationship between members of the LGBTQ2S+ community and police is paramount.
2. The EPS is on the right track and should continue its relationship building initiatives.

3. The external LGBTQ2S+ community is dynamic with many subcultures. The EPS should not expect success from a single umbrella engagement approach; building a successful relationship will take several different approaches over time.
4. The external community must be allowed a period of time to share their historic trauma before healing can begin.
5. The community must be given the opportunity to help define the new relationship through a time of trust building based on positive interactions.
6. The EPS should resist the urge to continue to "push" their way into the external LGBTQ2S+ community but instead "Let your actions speak and wait for the community to invite you in."
7. Continued feedback to the membership will be important to maintain momentum and ensure this is not seen as a "one-off".
8. Important to convey to this generation of police officers that they are not responsible for past actions but can help to build a better future.
9. The undertaking is supported by retired members of the EPS.

6. Summary of Recommendations

The following provides a list of all recommendations in this report.

1. The EPS should consider hosting some future major announcements within community spaces working closely with members of the internal and external LGBTQ2S+ community.
2. The EPS should promote and build upon the positive perspective of internal relationships by continuing this initiative and providing continuous feedback to the membership.
3. Review recruiting brochures for greater diversity and inclusion relative to LGBTQ2S+ community.
4. Explore the efficacy of a dedicated LGBTQ2S+ Liaison Officer.
5. Involve members of the internal LGBTQ2S+ Support Group in recruit training in conjunction with external community members to build cultural competency.
6. Create training scenarios that give recruits an opportunity to deal with situations involving members of LGBTQ2S+ community.
7. Utilize in-service training opportunities to reinforce education and training relative to the relationship with diverse communities.

8. Promote and enhance the role of the LGBTQ2S+ Support Group internally and externally.
9. Create on-line material that members can access at their own convenience sharing the history of LGBTQ2S+ marginalization.
10. Create a glossary of terms relative to LGBTQ2S+ community that members can readily access.
11. Work to develop open forum education sessions that members can voluntarily attend to provide ongoing cultural awareness.
12. The Chief should have regular meetings with Senior Officers to enlist their ongoing support and engagement with this and other institutional change initiatives.
13. The executive should meet with the sergeants and enlist their help to bring about culture change by sharing an appreciation for their organizational role.
14. Work with the Internal Support Group to assess practical ways of updating the dress and department policy in enhancing community relationships.
15. Work with the Internal Support Group to undertake a review of all police facilities and accommodate gender neutral bathrooms where practical.
16. The EPS should institute an ongoing review of policies and procedures to address systemic barriers in areas such as recruiting, internal transfers, promotions and physical environment.
17. The EPS should remain cognizant of the specific gender dynamics and continue to work to address them.
18. Explore opportunities through the Veterans Association to engage credible retired members to help build an understanding of past police LGBTQ2S+ relationships and the related impacts.
19. Review the proposal submitted on the Seattle Police Safe Place Initiative and determine efficacy in light of current and future relationship building initiatives.
20. Continue to research best practice initiatives in consultation with the Internal LGBTQ2S+ Support Group and external community.
21. The EPS should see this initiative as the starting point of a long journey. Continue to find innovative and collaborative ways of building genuine trusting relationships

with all segments of the broad community and in this instance, specifically the LGBTQ2S+ community.

7. Survey

The on-line survey was conducted shortly after the Chief's public apology and was open from May 3rd to June 3rd on the Service's internal electronic network at epsinput.ca.

Members of the EPS were notified of the survey through internal communication and encouraged to engage and share their views. Anonymity was assured and it was clearly articulated that responses would not be attributed to any specific individual. Members were made aware that the process was being overseen by an external party and only aggregate perspectives would be tabulated and shared with the EPS in the interest of advancing community relationships.

The following two questions were used for both internal and external surveys. A total of 23 responses were received for question #1 and 24 responses were received for question #2.

Question No. 1

If you were the Chief of Police, what would you change quickly and immediately in terms of the EPS relationship with the LGBTQ2S+ community?

Question No. 2

What are the different ways we should engage with the LGBTQ2S+ community?

It is important to note that due to the relatively small sample size that no overarching conclusions can be drawn based on this data. However, it is equally important to note that this process was not meant to be wholly statistically driven and was meant to offer members of the EPS an opportunity to engage and provide input on a purely voluntary basis. It is understood and appreciated that many individuals are going through an evolutionary process of understanding and may not be at the place where they can, or would like to, articulate their perspective on this. The very nature of this process is a part of their growth and must be respected as such.

There are numerous possible assumptions that can be drawn from the low participation rate including:

Lack of trust in anonymity - police are notoriously skeptical and many may doubt that their privacy could be assured.

Lack of empathy for the issue - we cannot be certain, but it is possible that some may be apathetic to this issue.

Lack of awareness - some feedback indicated that many are unaware of the historical nature of marginalization suffered by many groups including the LGBTQ2S+ community.

“Things are just fine” - there were strong suggestions that the culture within EPS had evolved and many people have no issue with general inclusivity. They don’t see this as an issue and therefore didn’t see the necessity of engaging.

Communication - it is possible that the communication methods may not have been effective in reaching the intended audience.

Ongoing follow up should be conducted to accurately assess the reasons for the engagement rate.

8. Focus Group and One on One Interviews

As part of the outreach effort, internal focus group meetings were conducted between September 10th -13th for both sworn and civilian members of EPS. These meetings were arranged with the assistance of the Edmonton Police Association, the Edmonton Senior Officers Association, and the internal LGBTQ2S+ Support Group. Members anonymity was again strongly communicated, and members were given the opportunity to participate in a group setting or in a private conversation with the consultant. The EPS Corporate Communications Branch was engaged, and Service wide messages were sent out on four separate occasions between June and September inviting members to email the consultant directly to express their interest. Members of the noted three organizations also made direct contact with members of EPS to encourage their involvement.

A total of 30 members engaged in group or one on one discussions over the four-day period, including two telephone consultations. Six members openly identified as members of the LGBTQ2S+ community.

The following table shows the breakdown of participants:

Sworn Active	Civilian Active	Retired	LGBTQ2S+
24	4	2	6

Like the on-line survey, this was a relatively low participation rate and many of the same assumptions could be drawn relative to the level of participation.

The purpose of the focus group and one on one meetings was to hear directly from current and former members of the EPS and gauge their perspective on the relationship between EPS and the LGBTQ2S+ community, internally and externally.

Interviews were conducted in a non-police facility and participants were encouraged to be open and candid with their views. Those who participated were refreshingly forthcoming.

Bearing this in mind, the thirty individuals provided meaningful feedback that can be extrapolated to form some general conclusions and provide the basis for valuable recommendations.

9. General Observations

Throughout both the survey and in person interviews, there was a strong desire for equality and mutual respect for all members within the EPS. There was a collective sense that the EPS is moving in the right direction and that greater emphasis should be placed on more proactive education and information sharing. Members believed that regular meetings with the LGBTQ2S+ community will help to build understanding of the history of the relationship and devise ways to move forward in unity.

It was clear from some of the feedback that many members of the EPS are unaware of the history of the strained relationship between police and members of the local LGBTQ2S+ community. This lack of awareness has led to a perception among some members that there was no need for an apology. There was no indication that this sentiment was coming from a place of malice or lack of empathy but was genuinely a symptom of unawareness. The review indicates that the EPS is an organization which is open to change and positioned to respond to healthy leadership on this issue. It will be important to be consistent and apply equal measures of proactive education and accountability to maintain culture change.

The following provides a more detailed analysis with recommendations based on the survey and interviews.

10. Perspectives on the Apology

There was generally positive feedback on the Chief's apology. Participants believed it demonstrated strong leadership and sent a message of openness and collaboration to the broad community and specifically, the LGBTQ2S+ community. Although some members did not understand or see the necessity for the apology, they were open to learning more about the historic and current realities which precipitated the apology.

There were some sentiments that the apology might have been more effective if it had been delivered within the community and not at police headquarters. They believed that on a go forward basis there are opportunities to engage with the community in their setting which will make it more comfortable for greater community participation.

Recommendation:

The EPS should consider hosting some future major announcements within community spaces working closely with members of the internal and external LGBTQ2S+ community.

11. Perceptions of Internal Relationships

Although much of this review was precipitated by historic actions of police on external LGBTQ2S+ community members, it was critical to gauge the perceptions and realities of internal relationships. With 20 percent of participants identifying as LGBTQ2S+, we were able to get some appreciation of the climate within the EPS. The overall sense was that relationships within the EPS were healthy with no overt or covert animosity towards LGBTQ2S+ members, as described by the participants.

Members felt the environment was supportive and that the EPS is generally a very positive organization. This sentiment was specifically expressed by LGBTQ2S+ participants who felt that the EPS has taken steps to create an inclusive environment within the organization. They indicated there was significantly more open dialogue between members and that it is incumbent on leadership to proactively create the environment for future success by preparing the organization to respond to culture changes. As an example, they cited cases where LGBTQ2S+ individuals are being selected first for priority positions.

Recommendation:

The EPS should promote and build upon the positive perspective of internal relationships by continuing this initiative and providing continuous feedback to the membership.

12. Recruiting

Creating an inclusive culture begins at recruiting. Police promotional information has historically targeted a narrow demographic of society whether from a gender or ethnic perspective. Over the last four decades, policing has gone through a significant adjustment in recruiting efforts to attract gender and ethnic diversity. This initial recruiting

effort which targets and attracts candidates is the first step in trying to create the right culture within any organization. The people create the culture and the culture influences action.

In order for the culture in policing to become increasingly accepting of members of the LGBTQ2S+ community, recruiting information must express that acceptance and invite individuals to be part of the police community. There were suggestions that a dedicated LGBTQ2S+ liaison officer would be advantageous in this effort. The review agrees with the intended outcome but recommends further analysis to determine whether members of the LGBTQ2S+ internal support group could serve this function effectively.

Recommendations:

Review recruiting brochures for greater diversity and inclusion relative to LGBTQ2S+ community.

Explore the efficacy of a dedicated LGBTQ2S+ Liaison Officer.

13. Recruit Training

Building cultural competency is one of the keys to lasting change. A strong core feedback both in the survey and in person interviews was the need to educate and share meaningful information rather than trying to bring change through policies, procedures and punitive accountability. In policing, institutional culture begins at the recruiting stage and is strongly reinforced early in recruit training. Recruit training provides a real opportunity to instill and reinforce cultural competency which will form the foundation for effective community policing marked by strong relationships.

It is strongly recommended that recruit training enhancements be accomplished through partnership with the internal support group and members of the external LGBTQ2S+ community. Authenticity will be critical, and this information should be delivered by individuals with lived experience. This is an opportune time to discuss the myths and misconceptions surrounding the LGBTQ2S+ community by having community members share their perspectives, experiences and concerns with policing. It will be important that the presenters have an appreciation of the intended outcome. These sessions should not be an opportunity to vent but rather to share challenges with a view to build understanding and mutual appreciation.

Scenario training is an important part of recruit training where officers are prepared to deal with situations they will encounter in the community. If not already incorporated into scenario-based training, it would be beneficial to create scenarios where recruits engage with members of the LGBTQ2S+ community in a variety of settings.

Recommendations:

Involve members of the internal LGBTQ2S+ Support Group in recruit training in conjunction with external community members to build cultural competency.

Create training scenarios that give recruits an opportunity to engage in situations involving members of LGBTQ2S+community.

14. In-Service Training

Police officers undertake in-service training to maintain critical skills and develop proficiency in emerging areas of need. Utilization of in-service training was proposed as an avenue to support initial recruit training and reinforce the intended cultural competencies. Though police encounter members of the LGBTQ2S+ community in general policing duties, some areas have greater frequency of contact, often in more distressing encounters such as Sex Crimes, Missing Persons, Vulnerable Youth, etc. In addition to general education and information awareness for all members of the EPS, area specific training is suggested for areas of high contact.

Recommendation:

Utilize in-service training opportunities to reinforce education and training across the EPS generally while focusing additional training in high frequency contact areas.

15. Promote and Enhance the Role of the LGBTQ2S+ Support Group

There was strong support for the Internal LGBTQ2S+ Support Group. The implementation of this group was a real and tangible indication that things are changing. All members felt that the group is creating safe spaces and people know who they can go to for assistance.

As the group evolves, it will be important to ensure visible diversity representative of the external community make up. It was specifically noted that most of the current membership of the group are white and efforts should be made to add diversity and intersectionality of membership, to remain effective and relevant. It was noted that the internal support group can serve a dual purpose of enhancing internal relationships and understanding while helping to improve external communication and relations.

The issue of rank within the group was also brought forward. There is a need to create a culture of respect for rank without allowing it to become an impediment to participation in the group.

Recommendation:

Promote and enhance the role of the LGBTQ2S+ Support Group internally and externally.

16. Awareness Through Diversified Approaches

All participants felt that the EPS should focus most of its immediate attention on fostering internal culture change relative to how members viewed the LGBTQ2S+ community. This cannot be accomplished simply through lectures in a classroom setting. Creating awareness material and making it available to members to access at their own convenience is an option to be utilized. There was a general sense that members have a sincere lack of understanding of the history of LGBTQ2S+ marginalization. Creating a glossary of terms that members can access would also be helpful.

Recommendations:

Create on-line material that members can access at their own convenience sharing the history of LGBTQ2S+ marginalization.

Create a glossary of terms relative to LGBTQ2S+ community that members can readily access.

17. Regular Open Education Sessions

Scheduling of different types of opportunities and events where individuals can meet, share ideas, develop their skills and knowledge, can be a valuable avenue to create the mechanism for culture change. Members felt that the EPS should provide these types of sessions where information can be shared in a nonthreatening, non-mandatory format. Members of the internal support group could be key stakeholders in supporting or helping to organize these sessions. There is opportunity for external community members to participate and share lived experiences and impart knowledge. These sessions would provide a critical tool to the many EPS members who are open to change, and potentially provide perspective to those who are more resistant.

Recommendation:

Work to develop open forum education sessions that members can voluntarily attend to provide ongoing cultural awareness and education.

18. Senior Leadership Engagement

As with the Chief, the genuine involvement of the Executive Leadership team is a key driver and sustainer of change. Of the 30 participants, seven were from the Senior Officers/Managers rank. Those in attendance provided strong support for this review and its purpose. It is incumbent that the Chief ensure Senior Officers/Managers understand and act clearly to support the goals of this review.

Recommendation:

The Chief should have regular meetings with Senior Officers to enlist their ongoing support and engagement with this and other institutional change initiatives.

19. Enlist Sergeants as Change Agents

It is often stated that Sergeants are the most influential rank in policing. Sergeants directly supervise members on the front lines. Sergeants often interpret and convey the message coming from the Executive and often determines whether the message is passed on at all. Sergeants approve reports and determine what to applaud or admonish thereby instilling and enforcing behaviours that ultimately create and sustain culture. The sergeant's role is critical in any culture change initiative. Without their understanding and willing participation, change is significantly harder to achieve.

Members believe that for this to be successful, the chief must directly engage sergeants and help them understand the important role they play. Sergeants must do a better job ensuring disparaging commentary is not allowed in reports. Reports are often approved that have homophobic or transphobic commentary. Officers are reported to intentionally misgender individuals rather than respecting preferred pronouns. The diligence of sergeants in sending such reports back for rework will help to bring about culture change.

Recommendation:

The executive should meet with the sergeants and enlist their help to bring about culture change by sharing an appreciation for their organizational role.

20. Dress & Department Enhancement

Dress and department guidelines are a hallmark of paramilitary organizations and can engender a sense of belonging among individuals coming from a myriad of backgrounds. Dress and department in most police organizations has experienced increasing changes

over the last three decades. For EPS, change has included the right to wear religious headdress and beards and softening of the stance on visible tattoos.

Members of the LGBTQ2S+ community believe that further evolution of the dress and deportment policy allowing them to express their cultural identity falls in line with these progressive changes. One suggestion was a pin that members could wear on their uniforms signifying they are a member or ally of the LGBTQ2S+ community.

This could help build relationships both internally and externally with LGBTQ2S+ members. Wearing of a pin would be strictly voluntary. The internal Support Group should be consulted to assess additional measures that could be implemented.

Recommendation:

Work with the internal support group to assess practical ways of updating the dress and deportment policy in enhancing community relationships.

21. Systemic Barriers

Several additional suggestions centered on internal systems and processes as they relate to culture formation and perpetuation. Recruiting material was previously mentioned and at this juncture we advise the EPS to review the current recruit selection process to ensure it is not a hindrance to members of the LGBTQ2S+ community.

Questions around gender and sexual orientation are deterrents to many individuals in broad society and unfairly discriminate against LGBTQ2S+ individuals. Some question whether there is a better method at arriving at various diversity measures and eradicate the perception of tokenism. Members within the LGBTQ2S+ community noted that they simply want to come to work without having to be reminded about their sexual orientation. They simply want to be treated like any other individual in the workplace.

It is unreasonable to propose an exhaustive list at this point, however, the issue of gender-neutral bathrooms was consistently raised. This is another practical way of demonstrating culture change. The EPS should examine ways of accommodating this request in current facilities and include them in all future facilities. The EPS should engage in a continuous review of internal systems with a view to eliminating discriminatory practices that impact various groups, including LGBTQ2S+.

Recommendations:

Work with the Internal Support Group to undertake a review of all police facilities and accommodate gender neutral bathrooms where practical in existing facilities and include them in future facilities.

The EPS should institute an ongoing review of policies and procedures to address systemic barriers within its institutional operating system such as recruiting, internal transfers, promotions and physical environment.

22. Gender Differential

Although there was consensus that the environment in the EPS was welcoming to members from a variety of social and cultural backgrounds including LGBTQ2S+, it was felt that females were having an easier time “coming out” than males. There are historical perceptions around paramilitary culture, perceptions of masculinity and moreover, what the role and traits of a ‘good’ police officer are that can impact and affect members.

This may be a residue of the past culture and the EPS should be vigilant that recruits coming in with open minds are not challenged by the historic prevailing culture, but rather, are assisted in changing the culture.

Recommendation:

The EPS should remain cognizant of the specific gender dynamics and continue to work to address them.

23. Retired Member Views

The stakeholders in this process wanted to ensure that retired members of the EPS had an opportunity to engage. The consultant attended a retiree’s luncheon where the purpose and process were shared with a large group of retirees and an invitation was given to meet with the consultant in a private setting that afternoon. Two retired members attended. The members in attendance express appreciation for the Chief’s apology. They did not feel that the Chief was blaming their generation of officers, and they understood that they policed in a different era and enforced the laws of that time, which treated LGBTQ2S+ lifestyle as a crime. They expressed genuine remorse for the harm caused to members of the LGBTQ2S+ community and noted their own personal transformed views. For example, the members expressed remorse of the harm caused by police raids on the Pisces Bathhouse and “outing” of members of the gay community and the resulting negative impacts on individuals and their families. There was acknowledgment that the laws have changed and “policing must change” in accordance with the law and society’s expectations.

Retired members believe that their involvement with recruits, in-service trainings, or lunch-and-learns could be an asset in helping current members understand the history of policing relative to the LGBTQ2S+ community. They would like to help demystify the historical police perspective and build understanding by sharing their stories and changed

views. The EPS has a unique opportunity to capitalize on the vast resources of The Veterans Association in this and future relationship building initiatives.

Recommendation:

Explore opportunities through the Veterans Association to engage credible retired members to help build an understanding of past police LGBTQ2S+ relationships and the related impacts.

24. Research and Implementation

The consultant was provided materials on the Seattle Police Department's Safe Place Initiative by a member who participated in the consultation process. This program was established in May of 2015 to address community relationship issues between the LGBTQ2S+ community and law enforcement in Seattle. The program created collaboration between community stakeholders and police to reduce victimization and enhance positive interactions with members of the LGBTQ2S+ community.

The member who brought the initiative forward indicated that the concept had been researched and presented to the EPS Executive for consideration. It was also noted that Vancouver PD and B.C. RCMP has adopted and implemented the program with great success. In reviewing the materials, it is believed that this program, or something similar, could assist the EPS in its desire to foster a stronger relationship with members of the LGBTQ2S+ community and should be followed up and a decision made by EPS Executive. Full program details can be found at: <https://www.seattle.gov/spd-safe-place>.

Recommendations:

Review the proposal submitted on the Seattle Police Safe Place Initiative and determine efficacy considering current and future relationship building initiatives.

Continue to research best practice initiatives in consultation with the internal LGBTQ2S+ Support Group and external community.

25. The Way Forward

To be effective in the 21st Century Policing paradigm, police must incorporate strong community policing principles devised from meaningful engagement with the community. As it currently stands, members believe there is a real disconnect between the EPS and members of the external LGBTQ2S+ community. Many believe this stems from a genuine lack of understanding and recognise that there is still fear in segments of

the community. The Edmonton community has distinct cultures, each with its own needs, the LGBTQ2S+ community is only one piece of the intersectional population in Edmonton. Members expressed confidence that many individuals within the external LGBTQ2S+ community are supportive of the steps being taken and welcome a new partnership with EPS.

As noted earlier, most EPS members believe the apology and ensuing consultation process is a step in the right direction. Members stressed that the EPS should expect a period of criticism, which may not be about current events, but may be an opportunity to share experiences, and historical trauma that has never had an avenue to be heard, or a safe space to share it. The EPS must be patient through this phase, as it must occur before any healing or trust can begin to develop.

As this process continues, it will be important to allow “the community” to define what the relationship looks like. The EPS is encouraged to continue their internal work and allow their actions to speak; leading by example and not via media. It was stressed that the current relationship is “miles ahead of where it was in the past.”

The EPS must appreciate that though they play a significant role in community dynamics, the issues are multi dimensional, centering on a variety of social and cultural issues that will take mutual cooperation, multiple stakeholders and genuine trust to resolve.

Recommendation:

The EPS should see this initiative as the starting point of a long journey and continue to find innovative and collaborative ways of building genuine trusting relationships with all segments of the broad community.